

Mr. Speaker, there are also suggestions to bolster technology by creating institutes of excellence at various locations throughout the country. This is a novel concept. However, in an age of integrated technology these miniature NTC's would lack synergy. This Member is afraid that in a few years someone will suggest reorganization that combines all the institutes into one or two units. They might even be called technical centers.

Mr. Speaker, this Member is also concerned about the proposed realignment of U.S. Forest Service regions to coincide with the NRCS regions because there is not that much commonality between their functions and responsibilities. This may seem like a reasonable idea for those at the undersecretary level, but it is not a good idea for the vitality and future of the NRCS. Colocation with the Forest Service would not be for the benefit of the citizen or for programs of mutual concern. The NRCS and the Forest Service clearly serve different constituencies. Because there is little overlap between the agencies' responsibilities and areas of focus, a regional division which makes sense for one of the agencies would not necessarily work for the other.

Furthermore, colocation of the NRCS with the Forest Service would, most likely, lead to the swamping of the NRCS and its programs by the larger agency. This Member believes there is a danger that the NRCS would eventually be absorbed into the larger Forest Service, rather than the two serving as coequal agencies. Also, since the Forest Service budget has been included in the Interior appropriations bill, this Member believes this is an added complication that may not have been thoroughly considered. The anticipated savings in administrative costs, as a result of colocation with the Forest Service, may also be a bit misleading since administration of the NTC's is usually a shared function between the NTC's and the State office of the NRCS.

If new administrative regions are a good idea, and they may be, then it would seem to make sense to utilize the facilities of the existing technical centers as a base of operation within the four proposed regions in which technical centers are now located. Historically, the SCS has shared locations with the ASCS, now part of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency [CFSA], because of mutual program components and for the convenience of the citizens that utilized the services. In fact, colocation of NRCS and CFSA is being required at the local level.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Member does not believe that the recently passed reorganization legislation was intended to change the mission of the old Soil Conservation Service. However, anonymous, but highly respected USDA employees have told me that NRCS officials have indicated that NRCS is no longer in the business of production agriculture! The SCS was born as a result of a calamity caused by nature and poor stewardship of the soil. The NRCS should be dedicated to assisting the private landowner in the production of food and fiber in a sustainable and conservation-friendly manner. Sweeping changes in the mission and basic structure of the NRCS should not be undertaken in haste and need the concurrence of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly urges the USDA to carefully reexamine the current proposal to reorganize the NRCS at the national, regional, and State levels. The pro-

posed changes are, on balance, a very bad idea. I hope our distinguished former colleague, Dan Glickman, will send the USDA teams back to the drawing boards when he takes charge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

COMMERCIAL SPACE ACTIVITIES ON CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. SEASTRAND] is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss one of the most important opportunities before the United States of America today. That opportunity lies in the commercialization of space and the development of commercial spaceports. In the coming weeks I will introduce Federal spaceport legislation, but I want to take a few minutes at this time to discuss some of the important strides the State of California, and the central coast in particular, have made in fostering the growth of commercial space.

In recent years I have been a leading proponent of commercial space activities on the central coast of California. But, well before me, there was a group of enlightened men and women who looked into the future and saw an industry that was waiting to be discovered.

Following the tragic Challenger explosion, it became increasingly clear that the long-planned shuttle launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base would not take place. In addition, between 1965 and 1986, the Air Force had spent in excess of \$5 billion for a military manned-space facility at Vandenberg. The Air Force ultimately canceled the Vandenberg shuttle program and the result was a loss of 4,000 high paying jobs. It was in this environment that a group of Lompoc community activists got together with a mission to transfer Vandenberg's shuttle facilities from Air Force to NASA control. This too failed.

The next logical step was to look forward and what they saw was the small satellite commercial space market so they applied to NASA for a center for commercial development of space at Vandenberg Air Force Base. This pursuit of NASA support and funding

seemed to be the most logical way to preserve both local capabilities and the region's growing aerospace industry. Moreover, NASA was already supporting 16 commercial launch centers across the country to the tune of \$1 million a year for each one. However, after 5 years of vigorous pursuit, it became clear that NASA had little interest in funding technology development west of the Rockies.

In 1991, with the assistance of then-Congressman Bob Lagomarsino, Vice President Quayle visited Vandenberg and saw first hand its commercial space capabilities. In addition, he significantly raised its profile. The Vice President commented that America had entered a new phase in space launches that would bring an increase in the importance of commercial launch.

In the subsequent months, the Air Force made a recommendation to Motorola that Vandenberg be used as the launch site for their Iridium satellites—a potential \$2.3 billion project as it was originally outlined. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, Motorola concluded that Vandenberg would not be a suitable site and the United States was faced with a half-billion loss in booster sales to France.

Through the efforts of local activists, specifically a determined community, State, Air Force, and congressional lobbying campaign, Motorola reversed its decision on Vandenberg. They signed \$1.1 billion in satellite and booster contracts with American companies Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas.

The decision by Motorola was a critical step on the road to turning what could have been a several billion dollar white elephant at Vandenberg Air Force Base into a commercial space launch facility with tremendous economic potential.

Mr. Speaker, when I was elected to the California State Assembly in 1990, I took an active role in promoting commercial space activities along the central coast of California. This included bringing these issues to the attention of Sacramento lawmakers. In 1993, I introduced legislation which designated the Western Commercial Space Center as the California Spaceport Authority. In addition, we supported the establishment of a commercial space office within the California Department of Transportation to serve as an advocate and watchful eye for available Federal resources. We also worked to obtain a sales tax exemption for qualified property used in launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base. Gov. Pete Wilson, a commercial space supporter, earmarked \$350,000 in 1993 matching funds.

In 1994, I introduced legislation to expand the charter of the California Spaceport Authority to encompass responsibility for development of regional technology alliances, legislation, and determinations concerning